583 to look for her, he gives them what he has in the way of money and goods, and the parents have to consent to the marriage by accepting this first payment. This practice is called abom.

584 This practice is exceptional, and the marriage proposal is generally made in a more conventional way. A man, having learned that there is a free woman in a neighboring tribe, a young girl or a repudiated wife, goes to the woman's parents and asks to see her. She comes
● [576] into the hut, sits down, and allows herself to be looked at. She does not speak if she has never been married, but she speaks if she is used to men; then she goes out after about an hour. Her brothers ask her opinion of the suitor and take the answer to the latter, who gives his opinion of the woman he has seen. This visit is called dzãga. If both agree to marry, they spend the night together; the man may leave in the morning without saying anything if the woman has not suited him and he does not wish to marry her. If it is the woman who is not satisfied, she asks her brothers to tell the suitor not to come back. In case of agreement, the suitor goes back several times for several days. The father of the woman fixes the amount of the dowry, and the suitor has to accept it.

586 If a married woman, not wishing to stay with her husband, goes off with another man, the latter pays the woman's parents the amount of the dowry which was paid by the former husband. This practice is fairly recent. In earlier times the former husband received the dowry of his successor directly or, if he refused it, it was a case of war unless another woman was given him in exchange.

583 Marriage is not considered final until the dowry has been paid in
585 full by the husband. The amount is variable, currently about 1,500 or 2,000 francs, in money or in various goods. The woman leaves her tribe and goes to live with her husband. Her arrival at her new village is marked by celebrations. [88] She is accompanied by women who cry out "e e ke o o o ko"; these cries are called mekogo. The husband's mother recites to her the genealogy of her son; then the bride goes into her husband's hut where the women of her husband's family bring her food. She is confined here for a week, and this is the "good welcome to the bride," eyale mbom.

585 Two days after the arrival of the bride, there are songs and dances
535 performed by women only: these are the bya bi mbom. The men play the tomtom and are spectators. This takes place near the husband's hut.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9



the palaver house, where he loves to sit and gossip around the log fire, or lounge on the *Ewang* (a native bed of poles). 517

Dancing is a favourite pastime, especially at the time of new moon, when the dance seems to have some religious significance. A Fang dance is a sight worth seeing; arrayed in long streaming armlets of dried grass, and large bunches of forest beans and molluscs shells tied around the ankles for castanets, they go through a series of rapid and graceful movements, some of which are not entirely free from obscenity. Flaming torches made of resin wrapped in plantain leaves are stuck in the ground and the drums keep up a perfect fusillade; the whole making a weird and extremely interesting spectacle. With short intervals of rest the dance usually continues throughout the night until daybreak (photo of dance shown on screen). 535 [373]

### III.—*Clothing, Ornaments, Painting and Tattooing.*

Fang men and women usually go about bareheaded; some obtain imported straw and felt hats from the traders and are very proud of them. A red worsted night-cap sold at the factories is very popular and much worn. These head coverings are chiefly worn for ornament and not to afford protection from the sun or weather. Until the opening up of trade among the Fang people their clothing amounted to almost nothing. The men wore a waist cloth made of bark from certain trees, a strong, tough, fibrous material, and the women wore a girdle stripped from the plantain stem, with some leaves from the bush or a piece of the plantain leaf tucked through the girdle in front and passed downward, backward and upward between the limbs and fastened to the girdle behind. Very often the women wore a kind of bustle made of dried grass dyed black, or red. In sitting down the women are very careful to first arrange the bustle. The native bark cloth, the girdle and bustle, are still worn in the bush towns; the women often make the girdle of imported glass beads strung on string made from pinesapple fibre, but people living in towns along the river banks wear imported cloths obtained in trade. As a general rule boys and girls run about without clothing until five or six years of age. Imported cloth is worn by both sexes and is often sewn together very skilfully and decorated with pieces of different colours. There are no recognised peculiarities of dress restricted to the subdivision of tribes. The cloth is cut out and sewed by each individual owner unless it is a trade cloth previously sewn. Cloth is usually hemmed and worn as a simple wrapper around the waist, and held in place by rolling in and tucking the upper border on itself. The upper portion of the body is not much covered by the cloth although some men and women wear it tied high up around the neck. There is no difference between the indoor and outdoor clothing. When imported needles and thread can be obtained they are used, but I have seen very skilful sewing done with a sharp piece of bamboo for a needle and thread made of pinesapple fibre. Upon the death of parents, clothes descend to the children. In saluting a visitor it is not customary to remove a hat or cap, if one is being worn, or any other article of clothing. 291 [516] [369] [428] [576]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9



now responsible and liable to two parties; if he is reasonable they all meet and talk the palaver. If the palaver is serious, each party appoints his *ntol* (ambassador). The palaver is usually talked in the main street of the town, before all the representatives of the interested clans, and before all strangers in town. The Fang are born orators, and remarkable gestures and orations are made while talking the palaver. The speaker usually walks backwards and forwards grasping and leaning upon a "palaver stick." He commences with: *M'ama* (I say thus); when speaking for another he says *A'ama* (he says thus); when speaking for the people of his town, *Ba ama* (they say thus). Sometimes the *ntôls* (ambassadors) sit in a canoe in the middle of a river or a stream, and talk the palaver, the injured parties being on either side of the stream. The case is talked, the goods demanded in payment stated, and an effort made to *lok nsang* (cut or end the palaver). If they succeed, then the palaver is *cut* (ended), and a dance follows; if no agreement is come to, the meeting breaks up and a tribal war exists between these clans.

*Salutations.*

There are three salutations common to all. Two friends meet, they each grasp the arm of the other, high up on the biceps; a slight pause is made, then the hand is slipped down to clasp the wrist. This is also the customary salutation used by the Bulu.

Two friends meeting salute by embracing.

A traveller entering the *abeng* (palaver house) walks over to the headman and sits on his knee a moment, at the same time placing one arm around the headman's neck.

Hospitality demands that all strangers be served food by the town women to strangers in the *abeng*.

Wives are loaned to guests.

Coarse conversation is indulged in by old and young of both sexes.

Considerable license prevails among the unmarried; less so among the married.

VIII.—*Invention, Natural Forms, Conservatism.*

*Invention.*—The arts in use are common to all the different clans of the great Fang tribe. Any new discovery as the working of iron is credited to the dwarfs or *aqui*. The natives are always ready to admit that the *aqui* are very clever; they have a saying "no person knows like a *mon aqui* (dwarf) what is inside the forest." When obtainable the natives use an imported saw, or file, and admit its superiority over their own crude tools. A Fang may be impressed at the knowledge and power of the white man, but is not greatly surprised; the reason for this is that many white men are credited with possessing supernatural powers.

Some of the clubs, tools and weapons approximate to the natural forms of the branches or roots of trees. Axe handles and the handle of a certain kind of adze have